

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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-----057260 262334Z /23

R 260143Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6710
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, VM, MY, ASEAN
SUBJECT: PHAN HIEN VISIT TO MALAYSIA

1. SRV VICE FOREIGN MINISTER PHAN HIEN VISITED
KUALA LUMPUR JULY 22-24. HE WAS MET ON ARRIVAL
SATURDAY EVENING JULY 22 BY MFA SECRETARY GENERAL
TAN SRI ZAKARIA ALI AND CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER
TENGKU RITHAUDDEEN AND PRIME MINISTER DATUK
HUSSEIN ONN DURING THE COURSE OF THE VISIT. ACCORDING
TO A JAPANESE DIPLOMAT, THE CALLS ON THE FOREIGN
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MINISTER AND THE PRIME MINISTER WERE MORE OR LESS
PRO FORMA AND HIEN'S SEVERAL HOUR-LONG MEETING
WITH ZAKARIA AND OTHER MFA OFFICIALS ON JULY 23
WAS THE MOST SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE VISIT. WE
HAVE NOT YET HAD A READOUT ON THE MEETING WITH
ZAKARIA, BUT HOPE TO HAVE ONE BY THE END OF
THE WEEK.

2. IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS HERE AS COVERED BY THE LOCAL PRESS, HIEN FOCUSED MAINLY ON THE SRV'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN. HE CHARACTERIZED MALAYSIA AS THE INITIATOR OF THE ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY (ZOPFAN) AND SAID THAT HE HAD "PUT FORWARD SUGGESTIONS" TO GOM OFFICIALS ON THE CONCEPT OF A ZONE OF PEACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. NOTING THAT THE "SITUATION IS NOW FAVORABLE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A ZONE OF PEACE AND NEUTRALITY" (A FORMULATION HE USED SEVERAL TIMES), HIEN REITERATED THE SRV'S PREPAREDNESS TO "TALK SEPARATELY WITH EACH MEMBER NATION OF ASEAN AND THE ORGANIZATION AS A WHOLE" ON HOW BEST TO REALIZE THE CONCEPT. HIEN SAID THAT ASEAN HAS ITS ZOPFAN, AND "WE HAVE MENTIONED A ZONE OF INDEPENDENCE, PEACE AND GENUINE NEUTRALITY." HE SAID THAT THE WORDING COULD BE DISCUSSED "TO GET A COMMON AND BROAD CONSENSUS," AND, "IF ALL AGREED, WE COULD EVEN HAVE THE WORD 'FREEDOM' FOR THE ZONE." ACCORDING TO ONE PRESS REPORT, HIEN SAID THAT THE INITIAL REACTION TO THE SRV'S "FLEXIBLE" ATTITUDE ON THE ZONE OF PEACE HAS BEEN POSITIVE IN THE COUNTRIES HE HAD SO FAR VISITED.

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3. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS HIEN WAS ASKED WHETHER THE SRV MIGHT JOIN ASEAN. HIS STANDARD ANSWER WAS THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO ANSWER THE QUESTION. HE WAS ALSO ASKED WHETHER THE SRV VIEWED ASEAN AS A MILITARY ALLIANCE; HE REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO COMMENT AT THE MOMENT.

4. MFA SECRETARY GENERAL ZAKARIA, IN BRIEFING THE PRESS ON PHAN HIEN'S VISIT, SAID THAT THE GOM WELCOMED THE SRV'S "POSITIVE" ATTITUDE TOWARD ZOPFAN AND SAID THAT THE WHOLE CONCEPT COULD NOW BE PUT ACROSS TO THE VIETNAMESE FOR THEIR STUDY. ZAKARIA SAID THAT HIEN HAD BRIEFED PM HUSSEIN ON THE SRV POLICY TOWARD SOUTHEAST ASIA, I.E., TO ESTABLISH FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION WITH COUNTRIES IN THE REGION ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE. ZAKARIA SAID THAT HIEN HAD CONVEYED A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO HUSSEIN FROM PRIME MINISTER PHAM VAN DONG EXPRESSING SATISFACTION WITH THE GROWING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND CON-

GRATULATING HUSSEIN ON HIS RECENT ELECTION VICTORY.
HIEN ALSO APPARENTLY BRIEFED HUSSEIN ON VIETNAM'S
BORDER PROBLEMS WITH THE PRC AND CAMBODIA.

5. COMMENT: PART OF THE REASON FOR PHAN HIEN'S
STOP IN K.L. WAS UNDOUBTEDLY TO SOLICIT SUPPORT
FOR THE SRV'S SIDE OF THE STORY IN ITS
PROBLEMS WITH CHINA AND CAMBODIA. AS ONE PART
OF THIS EFFORT, HIEN SEEMS TO HAVE SPENT MUCH
OF THE TIME ON NEGOTIATING A NEW RELATIONSHIP
WITH ASEAN THROUGH MALAYSIA, SPECIFICALLY BY
DISCUSSING THE ZONE OF PEACE CONCEPT WITH
ZOPFAN'S AUTHOR. WE HAVE NOT YET SEEN ANY
INDICATION THAT US-SRV RELATIONS TOOK UP MUCH
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TIME HERE. WE HAVE ALSO SEEN NO PUBLIC SIGN
THAT REFUGEES WERE DISCUSSED, ALTHOUGH THE SUBJECT
WEIGHS HEAVILY ON THE MINDS OF GOM LEADERS
THESE DAYS. THERE HAS AS YET BEEN NO EDITORIAL
COMMENT ON THE VISIT.
MILLER

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